

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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R 072050Z JUL 77

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2640

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

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EO 11652 NA

TAGS PINT SHUM BR

SUBJECT: MDB REACTS TO FURTADO CASSATION

REF: BRASILIA 5504

1. SUMMARY: MDB LEADERSHIP JULY 5 DECIDED DEPUTY MDB LEADER IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES FREITAS NOBRE WOULD SUCCEED CASSATED MINORITY LEADER ALENCAR FURTADO. NOBRE, WHILE OF SAME IDEOLOGICAL BENT AS AUTENTICO FURTADO, MAY LACK FURTADO'S PERSONAL CHARISMA. CHOICE OF NOBRE MEANS CONFRONTATIONAL TACTICS OF AUTENTICOS WILL CONTINUE TO DOMINATE MDB STRATEGY. MDB NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ISSUED BRIEF NOTE JULY 1 PROTESTING FURTADO'S CASSATION. PARTY CONTINUES TO DEBATE DISSOLUTION. ARENA NATIONAL PRESIDENT PEREIRA HAS DENIED POSSIBILITY OF ANY UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN TWO PARTIES AND DISASSOCIATED PARTY AND PRESIDENT FROM INDIVIDUAL ARENA EFFORTS TO CREATE A DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO PARTIES. IN STRONG STATEMENT FORMER PRIME MINISTER TANCREDO NEVES ACCUSED

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GOVERNMENT OF MOVING TOWARDS DICTATORSHIP. END SUMMARY.

2. MDB CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP, MEETING IN BRASILIA JULY 5, DECIDED VICE LEADER FREITAS NOBRE WILL REPLACE CASSATED ALENCAR FURTADO (REFTTEL) AS OPPOSITION LEADER IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES. NOBRE'S SELECTION WILL BE OFFICIALLY ACCLAIMED WHEN THE CHAMBER RECONVENES IN AUGUST. DECISION THWARTS EFFORTS BY MODERATE

WING OF THE PARTY TO REPLACE "AUTENTICO" LEADERSHIP WITH FORMER MODERATE LEADER LAERTE VIEIRA. RADICAL "AUTENTICOS" EMPHASIZED IN THEIR INTRA-PARTY NEGOTIATIONS THAT TO CHANGE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF PARTY LEADERSHIP WOULD BOW TO GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVE IN CASSATING FURTADO. PARTY LEADERSHIP LET IT BE KNOWN TO PRESS THAT CHOICE OF NOBRE BY ACCLAMATION WAS THE BEST WAY TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE PARTY WOULD NOT DEVIATE FROM POLITICAL (AND CONFRONTATIONAL) STYLE OF FURTADO.

3. COMMENT: FREITAS NOBRE IS CUT FROM SAME IDEOLOGICAL CLOTH AS FURTADO. IN FURTADO'S ABSENCE, ESPECIALLY DURING DEBATE OVER JUDICIAL REFORM BILL THAT LED TO PRESIDENT'S APRIL CLOSURE OF CONGRESS AND DECREED CHANGES IN CONSTITUTION, NOBRE PURSUED A TOUGH, CONFRONTATIONAL LINE WITH THE GOVERNMENT. NOBRE, A FORMER PROFESSOR, LACKS FURTADO'S PERSONAL DYNAMISM AND OVER LONG TERM MAY BE CHALLENGED FOR MDB LEADERSHIP BECAUSE OF HIS FAILURE TO PROJECT AUTENTICO IMAGE IN CHARISMATIC FURTADO STYLE. NOBRE'S CHOICE BY THE PARTY THWARTS AT LEAST ONE OF OBJECTIVES PRESIDENT MAY HAVE HAD IN CASSATING FURTADO: TO GIVE MDB MODERATES OPPORTUNITY TO CHALLENGE FOR AND CHANGE PARTY'S CONFRONTATIONAL LEADERSHIP. THE CHOICE OF NOBRE TO SUCCEED FURTADO, WHILE PROBABLY THE ONLY VIABLE OPTION FOR PARTY IF IT INTENDS TO PRESERVE ITS OPPOSITIONIST IMAGE, DOES NOT REDUCE FRICTION BETWEEN MODERATES AND AUTENTICOS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS REPEATEDLY SOUGHT TO EXPLOIT. END COMMENT.

4. IN OTHER REACTION TO CASSATION, MDB NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ISSUED BRIEF NOTE JULY 1, CALLING CASSATION "A BRUTALITY" AND PROTESTING GOVERNMENT ACTION. THREE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (INCLUDING NOBRE) VOTED AGAINST STATEMENT BECAUSE IT DID NOT GO FAR ENOUGH TO "SATISFY THE DEMANDS OF THE NATIONAL CONSCIENCE, NOR JUSTIFY THE PARTY'S PRESENCE IN THE CURRENT BRAZILIAN CONTEXT." DISSOLUTION OF PARTY WHICH SEVERAL AUTENTICOS CALLED "ONLY HONORABLE COURSE" WAS ALSO SUBJECT OF DEBATE IN MEETING, BUT CONSENSUS ON THEME WAS EXPRESSED BY MDB SENATOR SATURNINO BRAGA WHO CALLED COURSE "SUICIDAL" AND SAID PARTY MUST CONTINUE TO PLAY POLITICAL GAME AS BEST IT CAN. NEVERTHELESS, DISSOLUTION CONTINUES TO BE SUBJECT OF SPECULATION AMONG MDB MEMBERS AND PRESS WITH THEME LIKELY TO BE DEBATED AT A NATIONAL PARTY CONGRESS IN LATE AUGUST.

5. QUESTION OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN MDB AND ARENA WAS EFFECTIVELY PUT ASIDE BY ARENA NATIONAL PRESIDENT FRANCELINO PEREIRA JULY 4 WHEN AFTER MEETING WITH PRESIDENT HE TOLD PRESS "A CLIMATE DOES NOT EXIST FOR ANY UNDERSTANDING WITH THE OPPOSITION AIMED AT PERFECTING (POLITICAL) INSTITUTIONS." PEREIRA ADDED THAT EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A DIALOGUE IN RECENT DAYS HAD BEEN MADE BY INDIVIDUAL CONGRESSMEN, AND THAT THEY WERE NOT ON A MISSION FOR EITHER THE PARTY OR THE PRESIDENT.

6. IN STRONG STATEMENT EX-PRIME MINISTER AND MDB DEPUTY TANCREDO NEVES JULY 4 ACCUSED GOVERNMENT OF BREAKING BRAZILIAN SOCIAL CONTRACT AND MOVING TOWARDS DICTATORSHIP. NEVES SAID GOVERNMENT NO LONGER WAS CONFRONTING THE OPPOSITION, BUT THE WHOLE NATION, AND ADDED THAT GOVERNMENT WAS ISOLATING ITSELF AT HOME AND ABROAD. ABROAD, NEVES SAW GOVERNMENT CONFRONTING A TRADITIONAL FRIEND, THE US, AND AGGRAVATING ITS PROBLEMS WITH FRIENDS IN THE PLATE BASIN, WHILE IN EUROPE BRAZILIAN IMAGE HAD DETERIORATED AFTER APRIL CLOSING OF CONGRESS AND CASSATION OF FURTADO. TANCREDO WAS CAREFUL IN HIS CRITICISM, HOWEVER, TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN PERSON OF THE PRESIDENT FOR WHOM HE PROFESSED ADMIRATION AND GEISEL GOVERNMENT.

7. ARENA NATIONAL PRESIDENT FRANCELINO PEREIRA ANSWERED NEVES JULY 5 NOTING BRAZIL WAS NOT GOING TO "DEVIATE FROM THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PATH OF DEMOCRATIC EVOLUTION," AND CRITICIZING PESSIMISM OF OPPOSITIONISTS WHO ANNOUNCE CATASTROPHES. OTHER ARENA LEADERS ECHOED PEREIRA. JORNAL DO BRASIL, PICKED UP NEVES THEME IN JULY 6 EDITORIAL ENTITLED "RISK OF DICTATORSHIP." EDITORIAL POINTED OUT IT WAS IN NO ONE'S INTEREST FOR COUNTRY TO MOVE TO A DICTATORSHIP, BUT THAT MOMENT HAD ARRIVED WHEN RISK OF THAT COURSE WAS AT HAND. JORNAL CALLED FOR CONCILIATION BY BOTH SIDES, WARNING ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF BREAKING THE BRAZILIAN SOCIAL CONTRACT AND "MANDARIN" LEADERSHIP. JOHNSON

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Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009